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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/851,456	05/08/2001	Stephen Paul Zimmerman	8074M	3630

27752 7590 09/19/2005

THE PROCTER & GAMBLE COMPANY
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EXAMINER

BECKER, DREW E

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1761

DATE MAILED: 09/19/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/851,456

Applicant(s)

ZIMMERMAN ET AL.

Examiner

Drew E. Becker

Art Unit

1761

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 05 July 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4,6-13,15-18 and 23 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4,6-13,15-18 and 23 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

2. Claims 1-4, 6-7 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Smietana [Pat. No. 4,915,964].

Smietana teaches a nestable snack piece comprising a body curved about a first axis, the curvature forming a dip containment region which restricts the dip in at least two directions, an open end perpendicular to the axis, a restricted end which restricts flow when tilted past 0°, the axis not being parallel to a side, a vertical span, sidewalls, a isosceles triangular shape, a vertical taper of 0-45°, the restricted end being less than 75% the width of the open end, a segment of a right cone, a nested arrangement (Figure 7), a varying radius of curvature of 0.1-38.1 mm (column 6, line 70), and a width of approximately 75 mm (column 6, line 70).

3. Claims 1-4, 6-9, 12-13, 16-18, and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by McNeel et al [Pat. No. 6,412,397].

McNeel et al teach a nestable snack piece comprising a body curved about a first axis,

Art Unit: 1761

the curvature forming a dip containment region which restricts the dip in at least two directions, an open end perpendicular to the axis, a restricted end which restricts flow when tilted past 0°, the axis not being parallel to a side, a vertical span, sidewalls, an equilateral triangular shape, a vertical taper of 0-45°, the restricted end being less than 75% the width of the open end, a segment of a right cone, a varying radius of curvature (Figure 10; column 9, lines 25-41), and a nested arrangement (column 1, line 12).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Smietana as applied above, in view of Fritos Scoops Corn Chips (applicants' admitted prior art provided in the IDS of October 3, 2001).

Smietana teaches the above mentioned components. Smietana does not recite a length of 30-110mm. Fritos teaches a curved snack piece having a length of about 50 mm (see sample). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate the size scale of Fritos into the product of Smietana since both are directed to snack pieces, since consumers preferred snack foods of this size as the snack foods fit into their hands more easily, and since the mere scaling up or down of the snack piece of Smietana would have been done during the course of normal experimentation and

Art Unit: 1761

optimization procedures. In re Rose , 220 F.2d 459, 105 USPQ 237 (CCPA 1955)

(Claims directed to a lumber package "of appreciable size and weight requiring handling by a lift truck" where held unpatentable over prior art lumber packages which could be lifted by hand because limitations relating to the size of the package were not sufficient to patentably distinguish over the prior art.); In re Rinehart, 531 F.2d 1048, 189 USPQ 143 (CCPA 1976) ("mere scaling up of a prior art process capable of being scaled up, if such were the case, would not establish patentability in a claim to an old process so scaled." 531 F.2d at 1053, 189 USPQ at 148.). In Gardner v. TEC Systems, Inc., 725 F.2d 1338, 220 USPQ 777 (Fed. Cir. 1984), cert. denied, 469 U.S. 830, 225 USPQ 232 (1984), the Federal Circuit held that, where the only difference between the prior art and the claims was a recitation of relative dimensions of the claimed device and a device having the claimed relative dimensions would not perform differently than the prior art device, the claimed device was not patentably distinct from the prior art device.

6. Claims 10-11 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McNeel et al as applied above, in view of Fritos Scoops Corn Chips (applicants' admitted prior art provided in the IDS of October 3, 2001).

McNeel et al teach the above mentioned components. McNeel et al do not recite a length of 30-110mm, a radius of curvature of 15-500mm, and an open end width of 15-75 mm. Fritos teaches a curved snack piece having a length of about 50 mm, a radius of curvature of 15-500mm, and an open end width of 15-75 mm (see sample). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate the size scale of Fritos into the product of McNeel et al since both are directed to snack pieces, since

Art Unit: 1761

McNeel et al simply did not state any preferred dimensions, since consumers preferred snack foods of this size as the snack foods fit into their hands more easily, and since the mere scaling up or down of the snack piece of McNeel et al would have been done during the course of normal experimentation and optimization procedures. In re Rose , 220 F.2d 459, 105 USPQ 237 (CCPA 1955) (Claims directed to a lumber package "of appreciable size and weight requiring handling by a lift truck" where held unpatentable over prior art lumber packages which could be lifted by hand because limitations relating to the size of the package were not sufficient to patentably distinguish over the prior art.); In re Rinehart, 531 F.2d 1048, 189 USPQ 143 (CCPA 1976) ("mere scaling up of a prior art process capable of being scaled up, if such were the case, would not establish patentability in a claim to an old process so scaled." 531 F.2d at 1053, 189 USPQ at 148.). In Gardner v. TEC Systems, Inc., 725 F.2d 1338, 220 USPQ 777 (Fed. Cir. 1984), cert. denied, 469 U.S. 830, 225 USPQ 232 (1984), the Federal Circuit held that, where the only difference between the prior art and the claims was a recitation of relative dimensions of the claimed device and a device having the claimed relative dimensions would not perform differently than the prior art device, the claimed device was not patentably distinct from the prior art device.

Response to Arguments

7. Applicant's arguments filed July 5, 2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Art Unit: 1761

Applicants argue that Smietana did not teach a “substantially triangular shaped snack piece”. However, Figure 10 of Smietana clearly illustrates a triangular shape.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).


A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Drew E. Becker whose telephone number is 571-272-1396. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon.-Fri. 8am to 4:30pm.

Art Unit: 1761

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Milton Cano can be reached on 571-272-1398. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


DREW BECKER
PRIMARY EXAMINER
9-15-05